PT 2 of 3 SCS

EXCISE

Komitor 26 OCT 1977 (399)

Georgetown, Guyana

October 17, 1977

DEPARTMENT OF STATE A/CDC/MR
REVIEWED BY John Simms DATE 2-26-81
PORTIONS DENIED AS INDICATED

[redacted] E B6

Dear [redacted] E B6

I refer to your letter of September 28, 1977 to Mr. Jack Komitor of the Office of Special Consular Services concerning Mrs. Vera M. Talley, [redacted] E B6 Mr. Komitor forwarded E B6 your letter for reply since Mrs. Talley was presumably in Guyana.

I have confirmed with the Guyanese Immigration Service that Mrs. Talley entered Guyana on August 4, 1977. Their records indicated that Mrs. Talley planned to live at the People's Temple Agricultural Community located near Port Kaituma in the Northwest District of Guyana.

It may interest you to know that I visited the Agricultural Community on August 30, 1977 to determine whether an American citizen was being held against her will. At that time I assisted in the return of one American member of the Community to the United States who no longer desired to remain with the People's Temple in Guyana. I met many newly arrived Americans although I do not recall specifically meeting Mrs. Talley. However members of the People's Temple introduced me to a large gathering of about fifty to sixty elderly Americans and announced the purpose of my visit. Presumably if anyone had wished to leave they could have done so. Living conditions at the Community are austere but everyone is housed and there is a small clinic with an American doctor. Those elderly people that I spoke to appeared to be enjoying their stay in Guyana.

It is very difficult for me to comment on your charges about Jim Jones and his control over the aged members of his group. Some are receiving Social Security checks here and they must endorse them before they are cashed. I

presume that they turn over at least a portion of their monthly check in return for their room and board.

I have read a number of unfavorable articles about the People's Temple that have recently appeared in the U. S. Press. However, I have not learned of a single case of any American being held against their will here by the People's Temple. Apart from my visit to the townsite I know of several other visits made to the agricultural community by Guyanese Police and Government Officials. Here again individuals could have requested to leave but did not do so.

Nevertheless, on my next visit to the area which will be within 90 to 120 days, I will arrange a personal, private meeting with Mrs. Talley and inform you of the results of our conversation.

I hope the above information is helpful to you and [redacted] If you have any further questions or E 86 desire any additional information, please let me know.

Sincerely,

Richard A. Mc Coy
American Consul

Enclosure: Letter from Mrs. Talley to [redacted] E 86
c.c. Department of State (SCS)